



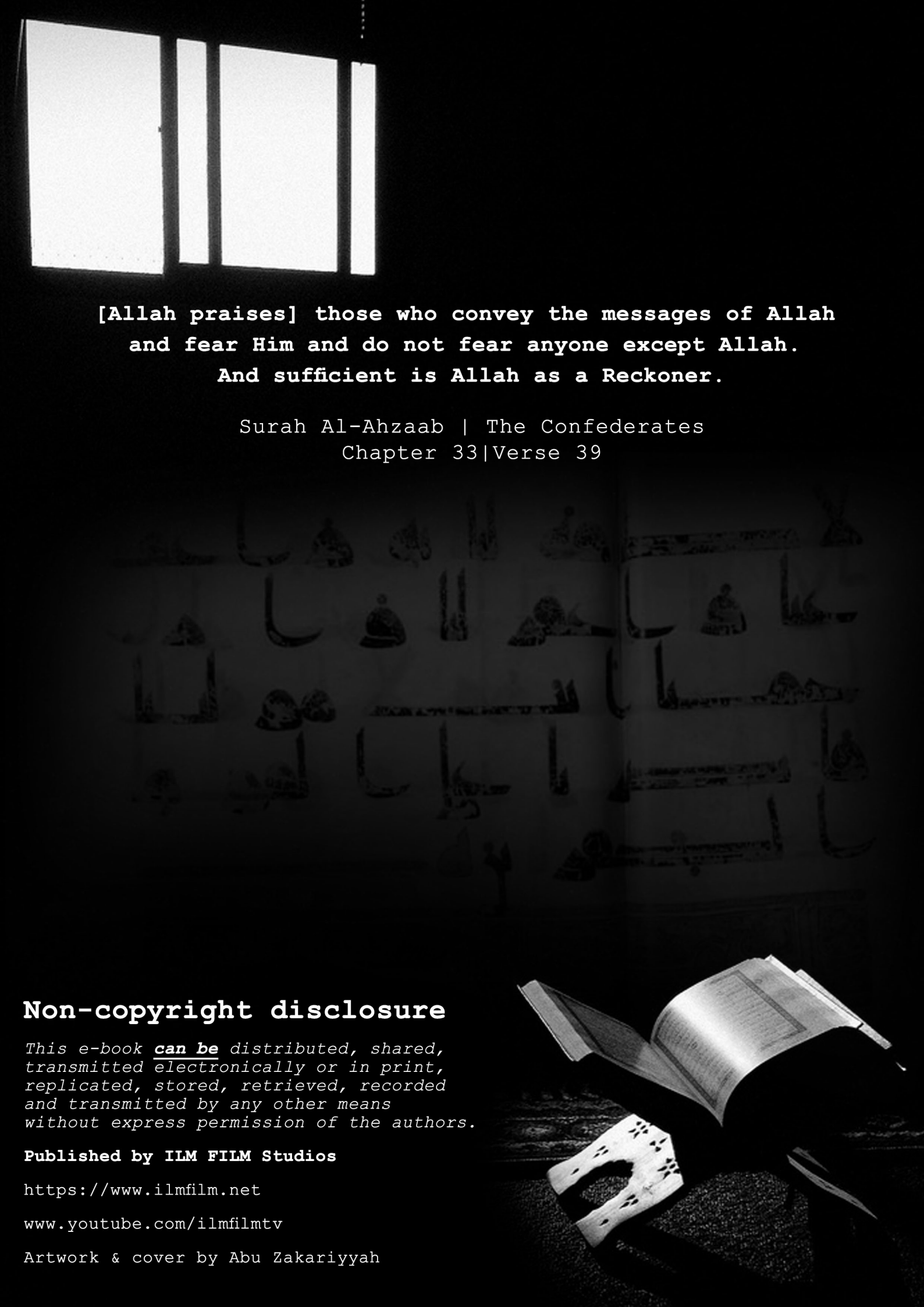
# GREAT MUSLIM LIVES

VOLUME IV



'ILM  
FILM





[Allah praises] those who convey the messages of Allah  
and fear Him and do not fear anyone except Allah.  
And sufficient is Allah as a Reckoner.

Surah Al-Ahzaab | The Confederates  
Chapter 33|Verse 39

## Non-copyright disclosure

*This e-book can be distributed, shared, transmitted electronically or in print, replicated, stored, retrieved, recorded and transmitted by any other means without express permission of the authors.*

**Published by ILM FILM Studios**

<https://www.ilmfilm.net>

[www.youtube.com/ilmfilmtv](http://www.youtube.com/ilmfilmtv)

Artwork & cover by Abu Zakariyyah

# Contents page

## Foreword

### Imam Shamil of Dagestan

(1797 - 1871), Eagle of the Mountains

### Sir Muhammad Iqbal

(1877 - 1938), Complaint to God

### Nana Asma'u

(1793 - 1864), Poetic Princess

### Dr. Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din al-Hilali

(1893 - 1987), Lighthouse of Learning

### Abdullah Quilliam

(1856 - 1932), Made in Britain

## Bibliography, References and Further Reading

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

# Foreword

May the Peace and Salutations of Allah be upon our beloved Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و سلم)  
The Trustworthy, The Final Prophet and Messenger of Allah.

*“Until the lion learns to speak, the tales of the hunter will be told”*

They remind us of our defeat, our degradation and our deviation from the pathways of progress, piety and prosperity. In such times it may be difficult to draw inspiration and find courage in our identity as contemporary Muslims, however history reminds us that Islam has always been strengthened and supported by men and women of integrity, virtue and of exemplary accomplishments.

It is with a heart full of optimism, hope and love for Al-Islaam that we present to the reader a rich catalogue of contemporary biographies, each one recounting the life and legacy of a great Muslim personality.

Collectively, all of our subjects have demonstrated outstanding will and determination to cherish and champion the legacy and beauty of Al-Islaam in its purest form.



# IMAM SHAMIL OF DAGESTAN (1797 - 1871)

## EAGLE OF THE MOUNTAINS

### A NOBLE WARRIOR

[1832, the battle of Gimry]

Who is this fearless warrior? Racing forth like a lion plunging into the enemy ranks, pouncing upon the adversary like a golden falcon, landing with the might of a hurricane, his sword flashing as it slices and pierces through the dark ranks of the oppressor like sharp rays of furious sunlight. He disappeared as quickly as he came, in a battle whose severity has drenched the earth with blood and littered it with bodies of dead men. Yet he, unlike many that day – survives, escaping the onslaught to become one of only two remaining warriors from his camp.



### HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

The year is 1797 and in the North-eastern village of Gimiri, located in Dagestan – a child is born to a Muslim family. At birth, his parents named him Ali however this frail and sickly child was renamed Shamil in accordance to the prevalent village custom observed by anxious parents seeking to ward off evil spirits from their offspring.

As may be deduced from his early change of name, the infant child was frail and suffered from chronic illness. During his childhood years he was subjected to bullying and physical abuse from his peers, however as the years went by he grew in stature and in strength to become a courageous and well-regarded young man who earned the admiration of the village folk on account of his eloquence, courage and intelligence.







## RUSSIAN AMBITIONS

Imam Shamil was a deeply spiritual and devout believer whose intellectual pursuits were vast and profound, however as a young man his experiences were marred by continuous and incessant raids, incursions and invasions inflicted upon his people by the Russian Empire. The Ottoman and Persian territory were being rapidly swallowed by the Tsar's forces and it was small communities such as the one to which Shamil belonged to who suffered the gruesome consequences.

Life under the duress of constant warfare may not have been ideal for a man of deep spirituality and learning such as Imam Shamil, however the very real consequences of war had to be mitigated by practical and effective means.

Imam Shamil soon joined the ranks of a local battalion which was under the command of Ghazi Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Gimiri, a remarkable and enigmatic commander whom the Daghestani Muslim warriors held in high regard.

As early as 1801, Russia had conquered Georgia and was poised to proceed and conquer more territory in an attempt to crush and subdue any resistance from among the indigenous tribes and peoples, her relentless pursuit of domination over Chechnya and Dagestan was challenged and confronted by the military efforts of a small band of warriors from within the local tribes and villages, resulting in what came to be known as the Caucasian War.





## A LEADER ARISES

While still in his early twenties, Imam Shamil was engaged in the noble pursuit of uniting his people under the banner of Islam when he and a small group among his comrades travelled throughout the region in an effort to educate and enlighten the local tribes about the principles of their faith.

It was in the year 1834, following the death of Ghazzi Muhammad and the assassination of his successor Hamza Beg - that an assembly of high ranking warriors and senior scholars attended a meeting to select the next leader in command, following the discussions and much consideration, Shamil was elected and charged with the responsibility of leading and driving the struggle forwards.

His priorities were to unite and consolidate the ranks of the Daghestani and Chechnian fighters against the Tsarist army. He also became the spiritual leader and Imam of the northeast Caucasian Islamic emirate, becoming one of only three people to have occupied the post.

Shamil, now Imam of the Caucasian mountains, organized and orchestrated courageous and remarkable military campaigns to counter the ruthless attacks from the Russian enemy. Under his capable leadership the united forces of Dagestan and Chechnya's resistance fighters were able to keep the invader at bay for a quarter of a century.

As is to be expected with any army, Imam Shamil's troops were at times defeated and overwhelmed by the disproportionate forces of the Russian troops and by the devastating onslaught of their superior arsenal. However, given the constraints in means and manpower, Imam Shamil's brilliance remained untarnished by such intermittent defeat – which peaked during the period between the years 1835-1836, following which he emerged with greater victories resulting from a series of highly successful military campaigns during the year 1837. Now revered and respected by friend and foe alike, Imam Shamil's reputation preceded him as news of his daring and brilliant victories against the Russian forces were being reported at home and abroad.



Subsequently, his influence spread throughout Chechnya and neighbouring regions where the people paid tribute to the great leader and commander when they conferred upon him the honorific title "*Eagle of the Mountains*", elsewhere in the world he was known as the "*Lion of Dagestan*".

Yet despite the stark and gruesome realities of warfare, Imam Shamil remained focused on the spiritual dimensions and directed much of his effort and attention towards the refinement and development of society by nurturing and building the foundations of a new society within the Caucasus which was to be governed and preserved by Islamic principles. Imam Shamil was to many historians considered a reformer, whose orthodoxy is evident in his opposition and denunciation of the prevalent forms of non-Islamic customs that remained deeply entrenched within local Daghestani and Chechen communities during the mid-nineteenth century.

## THE SEPARATION

As the years went by, Imam Shamil accumulated victories and suffered defeat against the Russian army however one of his greatest losses was to be inflicted during a fierce battle that took place in the year 1839 wherein the Russian army, under the command of General Alexander Grabbe, gained the upper hand over the forces of Imam Shamil resulting in the capture of the Imam's six year old son, Djemal-Eddin.

In the heat of battle, facing an unsurmountable military adversary – the Imam did his best to salvage the situation by saving as many of his followers and family as was possible in the given circumstances, however – despite his efforts and sacrifices, the loss of his dear son did have a profound impact upon the heart and mind of this legendary scholar warrior. Subsequently, Imam Shamil's longing for reunion with his child drove him back to the battlefield time and time again.



## THE ARISTOCRACY

Back in Russia, Djemal-Eddin was being raised and reared by a Georgian aristocrat who succeeded in initiating the Imam's son into the ranks of St. Petersburg's elites. As the years progressed, the young child grew up to become a member of the Russian aristocracy having even abandoned his faith in favour of Christianity and subsequently enlisting himself into the Russian military to serve as an officer in Warsaw, Poland.

Yet despite the years of separation and the undying hope of one day being reunited with his child, Imam Shamil finally attained his heart's desire in the year 1855, when his son - Djemal-Eddin - was ransomed in exchange for the return of some highly prized Georgian captives who had been held by Imam Shamil's fighters for a period of nine months.

In return for his son, Imam Shamil promised to release several Russian prisoners of war. The exchange took place on the banks of the river Michik, the date was March 10th 1855.



## OMINOUS NEWS

Though finally restored to his father despite the wide gulf now created over the years of separation – it was with great regret that Imam Shamil's reunion with his long lost son, Djemal-Eddin, took a tragic turn of events that proved to be an ominous foreshadow of misfortunes shortly to befall Imam Shamil and his cause.

Not long after his return to his people and family, Djemal-Eddin contracted a disease which escalated and soon claimed his life. The devastating event was further aggravated by news of the approaching Russian troops led by General Alexander Baryatinsky who was preparing an assault against Imam Shamil's fortress in Veden.

Now reinvigorated and renewed with enthusiasm, the Russians were hunting him down and had even advertised a huge reward for the Imam's capture.



## FALLING FROM THE SKIES

All of this mounting pressure and calamity would reach boiling point when in the summer of 1859, a bloody series of battles broke out in the Caucasian mountains, exacting a huge toll on both sides. At the end of an eighty day siege, Imam Shamil and four thousand of his fighters, supporters and family members were no longer able resist the Russian forces and their brutal military tactics.

The mountain siege was concluded and the Russians subdued the resistance from within. The Imam and his family were granted amnesty, an honourable exile and the discontinuation of war within the Dagestani region. These were the terms offered by the Russians in return for surrender and renunciation. Following his final battle, the Imam was taken to St. Petersburg where he was to meet Tsar Alexander II shortly before being exiled to a small town near Moscow and then to Kiev where he would retire and no longer mount military operations against the Tsar.

Aged seventy five and restricted to civilian life, no longer able to direct military campaigns after a quarter of a century in the service of his people, Imam Shamil embarked on what was to become his final journey. In the year 1869, the Imam was granted permission to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, a journey he had previously made and was keen to perform once more for what was to become the second pilgrimage of his lifetime.



## A HOME IN MADINAH

Imam Shamil is regarded as an exceptional leader and example not only for the people of Dagestan and Chechnya but for the Muslim world at large. Imam Shamil not only demonstrated formidable courage, command and consideration for his people – but he was also a religious and spiritual reformer and guide whose teachings and principles formed the basis of a reformed society based on Islamic principles.

Over the duration of twenty-five difficult and challenging years, Imam Shamil served as the living shield and the glowing lamp of the people of Chechnya and Dagestan, successfully repelling over three hundred and fifty thousand Russian soldiers.

He died in Medina in 1871, while visiting the city of the Holy Prophet (Peace and blessings be upon him). After a lifetime spent in the service of his people and in the interest of their liberty and prosperity, both spiritual and practical, the Imam finally reached his resting place in the vast expanse of *Jannatul Baqi*, besides the masjid and home of Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him).



# GREAT MUSLIM LIVES

OWN THE  
**OFFICIAL DVD**  
COLLECTION



**OWN THE COLLECTION**  
**HIGH QUALITY ORIGINAL CONTENT**

**STOCK  
AVAILABLE  
ONLINE NOW!  
ILMFILM.NET**

For updates on our DVD collection and  
release dates for new materials visit us at  
[www.ilmfilm.net](http://www.ilmfilm.net)



PAL



# SIR MUHAMMAD IQBAL (1877 – 1938)

## A COMPLAINT UNTO GOD

### INDIA OF OLD

British India also historically known as the British Raj – occupies a very significant historical era in world history. The rule of the British Empire over the vast estate and population of the Asian subcontinent lasted from the year 1858 through to 1947.

Britain's adventurous presence in India is replete with the allure and charm with tales of luxurious and exotic diamonds and mystical secrets transcribed in ancient manuscripts guarded by wise men. However, what is not so well celebrated is the undercurrent of heroic efforts made by Indians, of all faiths and conviction, to rid themselves of the oppressive and exploitative stranglehold of the British administration.



### HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

Sometime around the year 1877, in the city of Sialkot, a middle class household was given the glad tidings of a new born baby.

His name was Muhammad Iqbal and he was to become the fifth son of Sheikh Noor Muhammad and Imam Bibi, the family were descendants of Hindu Brahmins who had emigrated from the valleys of Kashmir before converting to Islam.

Sheikh Noor Muhammad, a tailor and a devout believer – earned sufficient provisions to furnish his new born son with food, shelter and basic education.





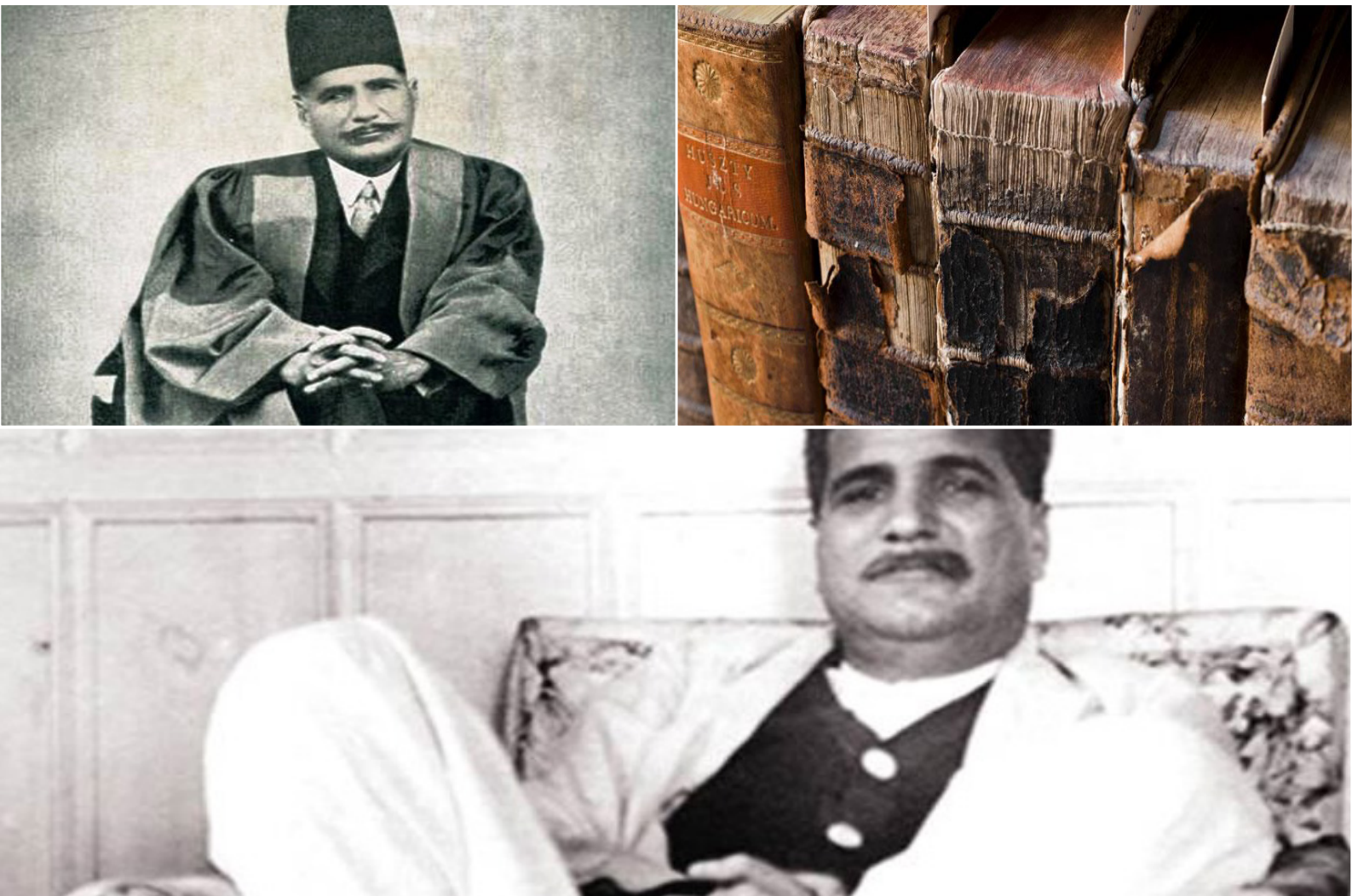
## THE EDUCATION OF IQBAL

Like many of his contemporaries in the Indian Muslim society of his day, Muhammad Iqbal received his first formal education at a local Maktab. The child would be instructed and taught to read and study several subjects under his mentor and advisor Syed Mir Hasan – under whom the young student learnt the Glorious Quran, also reading Urdu and Persian poetry as well as classical Arabic.

The glowing intellect of Iqbal kindled hope and anticipation in the mind of his teacher, who saw it fit to encourage the boy's parents to send him to a state school for a modern education.

Later on he attended several other institutions wherein he successfully earned a diploma from the Faculty of Arts at Murray College followed by a Bachelor of Arts in philosophy from the Government College in Lahore, where in the year 1897 he completed his studies in English literature and the Arabic language. Muhammad Iqbal was an intelligent and dedicated pupil.

Soon after earning an honors degree in Arabic and English literature followed by his Master's degree in Philosophy, the young scholar, only twenty three years of age, became a lecturer teaching Arabic at the Oriental College, in Lahore.



## A YOUNG POET AND HIS DREAMS

Although academia had consumed much of his ordinary life, he soon began to earn a reputation for his growing involvement in the poetic establishment and his works earned the reputable attention of distinguished poets such as Nawab Mirza Khan and Mirza Arshad.

The flickering flame of an exceptional form of poetry remained bright and warm in his dreaming heart. A philosopher of some sort whose steady flow of wisdom and artistry of words slowly filled the cup of eloquence, spilling out of his profound reverie and into the margins of daily life.



## JOURNEYING TO GREAT BRITAIN

Yet if this towering intellect found solace and romanticism in India's vibrant tapestry of colours, shapes and sounds, he would soon be confronted with the brittle reality life as a stranger when in 1905 the young scholar travelled to Britain on the advice and recommendation of his Philosophy teacher and close friend, Sir Thomas Arnold.

In recognition and appreciation of his brilliant academic record, Iqbal was granted a full scholarship to attend Trinity College, in Cambridge - where he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts thereafter he travelled to Germany where he studied and earned his Doctorate degree on the development of continental Philosophy, his thesis was on the subject of Persian Metaphysics and he was awarded the degree from the Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich, Germany.

He returned to Britain where he was called to the Bar at London's Lincoln's Inn - subsequently qualifying as a barrister.

Muhammad Iqbal's experience in Europe granted him a unique insight and opportunity to observe the cultural norms of the Occidental world. Impressed by

their work ethic and insatiable thirst for knowledge, the young man soon realized that it was by virtue of their inquisitive mentality and the desire to explore and challenge the forces of nature that Europeans made such great advancements in science.

His study of Western classics such as Goethe and Nietzsche in particular - also left an indelible mark on the thought and meditations of Muhammad Iqbal.

However, despite these worldly developments - he lamented the fact that Europe was still severely stricken by the malaise and maladies of inborn racism, extreme materialism and the prevalent culture of competitiveness, exasperated by popular theories such as Darwin's survival of the fittest.

If Europe had surpassed the world in terms of science and philosophy, he remarked, it was at the expense of spiritual and moral advancement. This he opined, was not a cause for celebration. A powerful civilization blessed with material means but deprived of spiritual wealth and the guiding light of faith was as much a threat to herself as she would be unto others, as proven by the unprecedented loss of lives witnessed during both world wars in Europe.



## THE GREATNESS WITHIN

As the Ottoman Caliphate was on its death bed and the Muslim world experienced the degenerative effects of stagnation, subjugation and hopelessness - Muhammad Iqbal's nationalistic affections dissolved as he contemplated and mused over the factors - both internal and external - that had conspired and contributed towards the gradual downfall of the Muslim Ummah.

Thus during a transformative and critical period in the life of Muhammad Iqbal, his thoughts were reconnected with the faint - yet still beating heart - of the Muslim civilization. He began concentrating intensely on the study of Islam, expounding on the cultural and historical importance of Islamic civilization in an attempt to resuscitate the heartbeat of a once proud and glorious people.

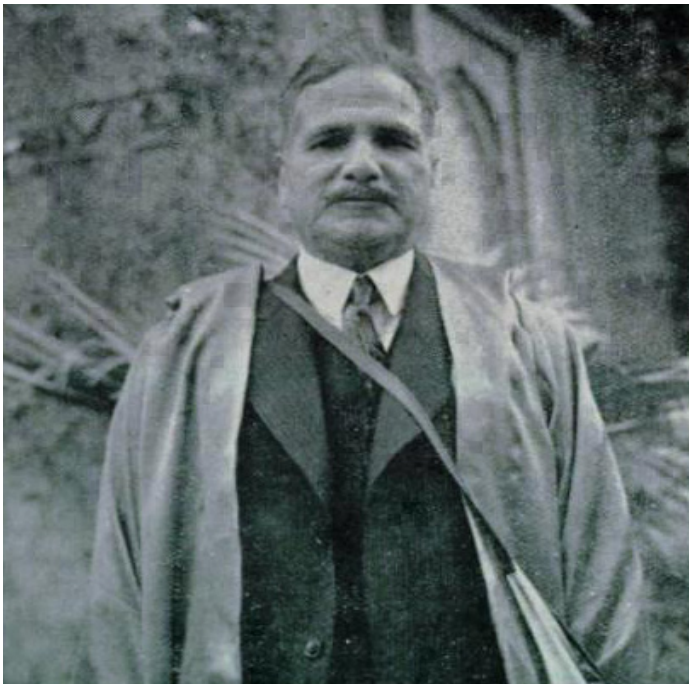
Through the powerful and eloquent medium of poetry, he spoke of the invigorating and spiritual force of Islam and how it would be sufficient to rescue humanity from continuing its rapid course towards self-destruction. His poetry was transformed during this pivotal phase of his life, he began to talk of Unity between all Muslims emphasizing the principle of being one Ummah while disavowing nationalism and political schism.

## A SOUL TRANSFORMED

Muhammad Iqbal returned to his homeland in the year 1908, joining his old college as a professor of philosophy and English literature, however driven by his dissatisfaction for working under the British administration he began practicing law on a temporary basis, making enough to support himself and his family.

The Muhammad Iqbal who had returned to India was a transformed soul, his literary activities began to overshadow all other pursuits as he dedicated more of his time and efforts towards the composition of poetry, for which he soon earned the attention of the nation when he wrote his famous poem –*Shikwa*– in the literary form of complaints directed to God.

Allama Muhammad Iqbal's blossoming passion and zeal for Islam and Muslim civilization was demonstrated by his increasing use of the Urdu and Persian languages with which he composed much of his latter poetry reviving a collective spirit of hope and dignity across the Muslim world.



## POLITICS AND PAKISTAN

Although a call for the partition of India between Hindu and Muslims was already common, it was the support and advocacy of Allama Iqbal that marked significant changes to the movement.

He became increasingly involved in the political, intellectual and social cause on behalf of India's Muslim minority, serving as a member in the *All-Indian Muslim League* and delivering several influential lectures, most notably the iconic speech delivered to a vast crowd in Allahabad in the year 1930.

Iqbal was convinced that if the Muslim minority remained a part of India, they would face imminent threats from the majority Hindu population.

His vision and concerns for the Muslims of India were the subject of ongoing correspondence with M. Ali

Jinnah, who had been living in England for several years. Iqbal initiated contact with Jinnah encouraging him to return to India and to assume leadership of the *All-Indian Muslim League*.

Jinnah, who at first was reticent and sceptical about Iqbal's ambitious project to create a new homeland for the Muslims of India, was soon convinced of the urgency of the matter – resulting from the mounting threat and hostilities directed to the Muslims of India at the hands of Hindu opposition headed by a number of right wing congressional leaders.

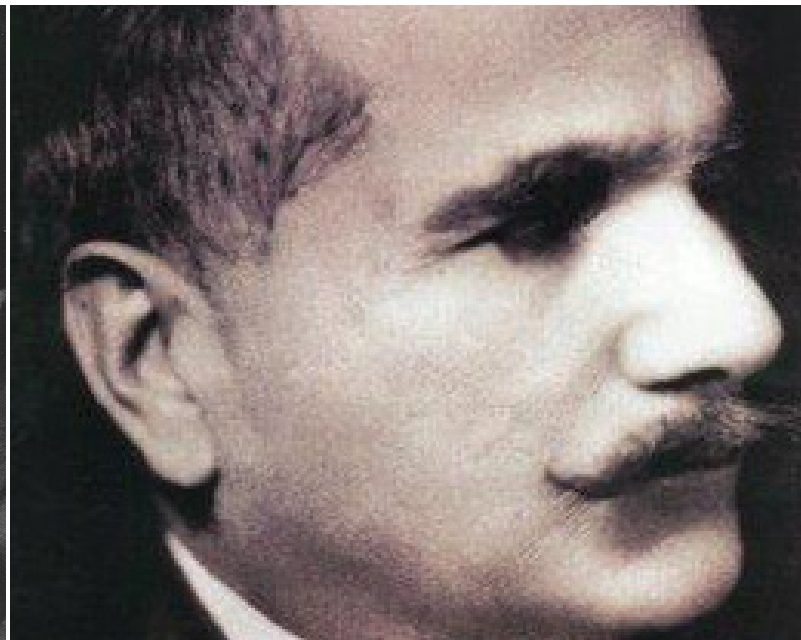
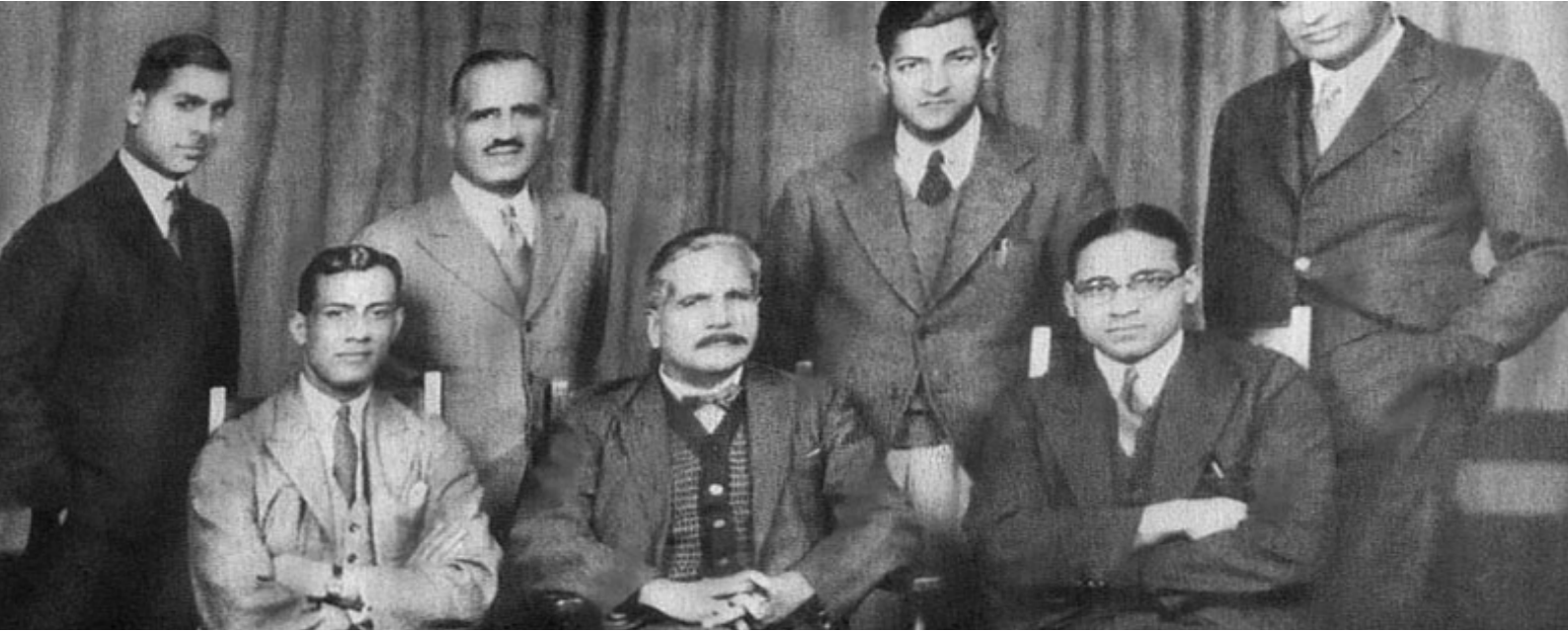
Thus Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Allama Iqbal were united in purpose and began to pursue the same objective though it was clear that Iqbal's Islamic motivations were not entirely shared by Jinnah, who was more of an advocate and champion for political sovereignty and secular reform.



## LEGACY AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Muhammad Iqbal, was the poet and thinker who used his pen to transform the hearts and hopes of a nation under siege, rescuing it from the dangers of ineptitude and ignorance of self. He was also distinguished for his philosophical and academic contributions, particularly for his central theme of *Khudi*, which is loosely translated as the *Ego* and has often been compared to Nietzsche's concept of a *Superman*.

His services and council were sought far and wide, in fact it is well documented that Mahatma Gandhi had invited Iqbal to serve as a teacher in one of India's institutions and that in the year 1922, Muhammad Iqbal received a knighthood from King George of Great Britain who conferred upon him the prestigious title of Sir Muhammad Iqbal.



## THE FINAL VERSE

Sir Muhammad Iqbal drew closer to his final day on earth - in the year 1933. Shortly after returning home from an international trip to Spain and Afghanistan he was struck with an unknown form of throat illness.

Following several months of discomfort and deteriorating health he eventually died of the illness on April the 21st in the year 1938, unable to witness the historic day in 1947, when millions of Indian Muslims would finally reach the promised-land for which he advocated, wrote and campaigned for so sincerely and passionately, in what came to be known as *Pakistan*.



# GREAT MUSLIM LIVES



**ILMFILM.NET**



# NANA ASMA'U (1793 – 1864)

## POETIC PRINCESS

### THE JEWEL OF SOKOTO

In the western coast of Africa, where silver and gold have become common features of nature's store, there are stories and legacies of lives that are yet more precious and unique.

If the amazing Islamic empire of Sokoto was the crown of northern Nigeria, then Nana Asma'u was one of its most precious jewels. Nana Asma'u bint Shehu Usman Dan Fodio was of noble lineage and distinctive rank – her father was the founder of the magnificent Islamic empire of Sokoto.

She became the epitome of true scholarship and intellectual brilliance – a product of her father's life long mission to promote education and enlightenment for men and women of the society, at a time when the ruling class misappropriated and monopolised knowledge and education to subjugate the masses and usurp power.



### THE SCHOLAR'S DAUGHTER

Asma'u was born a twin to her brother Hassan, the year was 1793. Her name is derived from Asma bint Abu Bakr, the illustrious daughter of the Prophet Muhammad's (Peace and blessings be upon him) closest companion and supporter, Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (May Allah be pleased with him).

The proud daughter of a great leader and intellectual whose brilliance and tireless struggle against ignorance became proverbial. Nana Asma'u was the product of a father whose objective as a ruler and empire builder was to advocate for the education of women and the empowerment of the weak in society.

His daughter's biography and legacy is a testament to his success, Nana Asma'u was a gifted Poetess, an erudite scholar, a prolific author and educator as well as an activist and a passionate community leader.

### EDUCATION AND UPBRINGING

By the year 1799, the five year old Asma'u had already been attending one of the local schools that was founded by her father.

The school was quintessentially African with little boys and girls busy transcribing verses from the Noble Quran onto little wooden tablets with black ink made from vegetable resin, the walls were made from mud bricks and the sunlight was a ready source of illumination for the eager students.

## FATHER AND DAUGHTER TIME

Shehu Usman Dan Fodio was a very caring and attentive father to his children, he had popularised the advancement of education in general and female education in specific, citing the gross abuse of power which was acquired and monopolised by men of distinction through the privilege of education.

As was customary in the household of Nana Asma'u, she would wait outside her father's room ready for when he returned from lecturing and leading the congregations in prayer. As per his custom when arriving home, he would entertain his sons and daughters in conversation, the daily school activities would be inspected and Asma'u would read out the contents written on her tablet word for word as her father listened to her attentively and carefully, this daily communion between father and daughter would be consummated in prayers and blessings upon the little girl before she would finally be granted leave to join the womenfolk and partake in the family meals.

Her intellect was vast and profound, demonstrated by the ease and fluency with which she could speak classical Arabic, Hausa and Fulani dialects. In times of peace and reconciliation her wise council and mastery of political strategy repeatedly benefitted the rulers of Sokoto.

## THE YAN TARU SISTERHOOD

Education, teaching and the pursuit of wisdom formed a golden constant in the life of Nana Asma'u but her challenge and that of many cultured and educated leaders in history was to discover the most appropriate and effective way of bridging the gap between a meaningful education and the masses of people who made up society.

It was during the caliphate of Muhammad Bello, her brother, that the foundations of this new system were established.

Concerned and apprehensive about the prevalent condition of common women in her society, many of whom were married early and subject to decades of domestic servitude and oppression at the hands of male relatives, Nana Asma'u like her father before her, objected vehemently against the clear misapplication of the prophetic tradition – *The Sunnah*- in regards to the rights and responsibilities of women, especially those that had been committed to the institution of marriage.

Of great concern was the normalisation of female illiteracy and the prevalent notion that a woman's service to her husband was the only real function of her existence, ignoring the fact that Islam emphasises the spiritual and moral responsibilities of both genders in equal and due measures.

From her scholarly prospective, she who is responsible before God must also be empowered and enabled to discharge that responsibility by means of education, cultural enrichment and empowerment.





This conviction was not resigned to the fleeting moments of frivolous passion or an empty vision of a society that only exists in the utopian romantics of poets and dreamers, quiet to the contrary - Nana Asma'u was a woman of rank and status but perhaps more importantly, she was pragmatic and courageous enough to leverage her influential position to empower the women in her society, many of whom were deprived and detached from any formal means of education.

The system of education she subsequently pioneered took the form of a grassroots movement wherein she would organise villages and gather local women under the leadership of an appointed female supervisor and teacher that came to be known by all as a *Jajji*. The growing network of women's associations headed by the *Jajjis* came to be known as '*Yan Taru*'.



## **A WOMEN'S KNOWLEDGE NETWORK**

Nana Asma'u's system favoured women who were at high risk of neglect and maltreatment in society, among the most vulnerable were widows, divorcees and pre-pubescent girls between the ages of eight to twelve years old.

Because this group was comprised of women who were without husband or yet to be married, they were the most suitable recruits as they had less restrictions on travel and were a little less constrained by household responsibilities in contrast to married women, however it was also important to ensure that divorcees, widows and under-aged girls received an adequate education to prepare them for a more independent and dignified presence in society.

Knowledge and literature were transmitted through the medium of poetry, rhyming couplets and litanies that would be rehearsed and memorised as part of the learning process.

The prescribed curriculum was designed by Nana Asma'u and a number of her manuscripts served as the foundation for many of the subjects taught and memorised by the women.

## **THE MOBILE UNIVERSITY**

The commitment required for this newly established organisation to take root and flourish was demanding and required both physical and intellectual fortitude. The '*Yan Taru*' were accustomed to travelling from village to village, trekking through bushes and across rivers both in the heat of summer and under heavy torrential rains, the women were also exposed to predators and poisonous insects out in the wilderness, however the drive to spread knowledge and to socialise women fortified their hearts and minds. Old and young women alike would participate in these field trips, however it was the youngest members who carried the community's hope for the future and Nana Asma'u would often pray for their success.

As for the social impact and services rendered by the '*Yan Taru*' to the communities and villages in which they operated, these included delivering new born babies, washing the bodies of dead women, cleaning the mosques, teaching children how to read and write in Arabic, counselling women about marital affairs and instructing them how to perform their prayers properly. Nana Asma'u paid careful attention to the wellbeing and development of her students, she would also use her close relationship with her brother, Caliph Muhammad Bello - to raise awareness of the general plight and needs of the womenfolk within the cities and villages.

## KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

Once sufficiently familiar with the system of learning and qualified in the various branches of knowledge encompassed by the '*Yan Taru*', each student would be eligible to graduate and participate in a ceremony called *Nadi*.

The newly qualified student and soon to be instructor would be handed a red cloth to tie around her head covering, this red ribbon signified her initiation into the ranks of the *Jajjis*, thus qualifying her to transmit her learning onto new students.

Nana Asma'u succeeded in creating a golden chain of transmission that propagated and multiplied the stock of knowledge and sciences among womenfolk, the system and growing network of teachers she had engineered was organic and culturally appropriate within the villages and cities in which the lives of women were being enriched and transformed through the agency of education and culture.



## INTELLECTUAL LEGACY

A mother to her students and a care-giver for her society, Nana Asma'u engaged directly with and contributed towards the advancement and wellbeing of her people.

Nana Asma'u was a polyglot and a polymath who had the ability to write and lecture on several diverse topics from various dimensions be they spiritual, historical, literary, political, medical or emotional. Her charisma and wisdom earned her a central role in the Caliph's administrative and political cabinet.

Once described as the woman who stitched the world together, her negotiation and restorative qualities helped her bridge the gap between the ruling class and the overwhelming mass of under-educated and under-privileged women and men. It was her custom

to maintain correspondence with other female scholars as far off as Morocco while also collecting rare manuscripts from the East which she would then simplify and translate for the benefit of her students.

Nana Asma'u also used her vast knowledge and comprehension of religious matters to educate women about the faith, she explained to them the history of Islam from its earliest days and wrote poetry detailing the articles of faith and principles of the religion in simple and relatable verses that were memorised and rehearsed by women young and old.

Nana Asma'u lived a long and blessed life, she passed away in the year 1864. She is buried besides the resting place of her father, the great Shehu Usman Dan Fodio.



# **DR. MUHAMMAD TAQI-UD-DIN AL-HILALI (1893 – 1987)**

## **LIGHTHOUSE OF LEARNING**

### **KNOWLEDGE IS POWER**

It is with the passing away of Scholars that knowledge is lifted from the hearts of men, for it has been written that scholars are the true inheritors of the Prophets, they serve as the vessels through which wisdom and guidance is preserved and passed onto the next generation untainted and unchanged.

Destined to become among the most prolific Islamic scholars, authors and educators of the twentieth century. A luminary whose name has become synonymous with the translations, commentaries and compilations of classic Islamic manuscripts in several languages. Dr Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din al-Hilali gave his life to learning and served millions of ordinary men and women through the powerful medium of education.

### **BIRTH AND LINEAGE**

For Dr Taqi-ud-Din al-Hilali, a lifetime's journey in search of knowledge and guidance began in the year 1893, on the auspicious occasion marking the birth of an infant child somewhere in a picturesque village oasis, buried deep within the valleys of the Moroccan countryside.

Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din bin Abdil-Qadir al-Hilali was born into a noble and religious family that had settled in Morocco after having migrated from their ancestral homeland of Tunisia.

### **EARLY EDUCATION AND CAREER**

Born of a scholarly and intellectual father, the young child soon embarked in the traditional pursuit of Quranic studies at a very early age, his efforts to read and recite the sacred text resulted in complete memorisation of the Quran at the tender age of twelve years old.

The young prodigy then proceeded to acquire knowledge in the field of Arabic grammar, Prophetic traditions and languages – of which he became fluent in addition to knowing several others including the English and German languages. While still in his twenties, the young scholar had gained entrance into two of the Muslim world's oldest universities, Al Qayrawan and Al-Azhar.

After graduating, the budding intellect pursued higher studies in Egypt from where he would traverse long distances often crossing continents in pursuit of further education and the acquisition of knowledge.

His travels have taken him to several countries including India, Iraq, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and several European nations wherein he learnt and also took teaching positions. Among his most adventurous journeys and destinations was the distant land of India, to which he travelled and became the resident head of Arabic studies at the Darul-uloom Nadwatul

Ulama in Lucknow, while simultaneously advancing his own studies in the discipline of Hadith under the tutelage and supervision of senior Indian scholars.

Upon completing his studies in India, Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din al-Hilali migrated to Iraq, staying there for a duration of three years before receiving an invite at the request of King Abdul 'Aziz bin Saud – who offered him a prestigious teaching post in the heart of the Muslim world.

Recognized and recommended by virtue of his impressive and expansive academic profile, Dr Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din al-Hilali enjoyed the audience of students and scholars who offered prayers and sought knowledge in the city of Medinah's Al-Masjid an-Nabawi, where he also led the prayers for two years before spending a year in Mecca, delivering lectures in Masjid al-Haram, Islam's holiest site.

Following his tenure in Saudi Arabia, Dr al-Hilali joined the faculty at the University of Baghdad where he studied and later served as an assistant professor before moving once more to India, settling there for a second time at the University of Lucknow where he taught and studied simultaneously.

## ACTIVISM AND OBJECTIVISM

Though Dr al-Hilali's life is notable in its exemplary pattern of continuous learning and teaching, his journey was one of serial and gradual progression both in the academic and spiritual realms. At the beginning of his quest for knowledge the young scholar was initiated into the Tijani branch of Sufism, which is prevalent in North Africa, however following his broad studies and international exposure to various scholars at the universities in which he studied and lectured, his filial affiliation to the Tijani Sufi order was severed and he became an outspoken critic of Sufism in general and Tijaniyyah in particular, favouring orthodox tradition instead.

Dr Muhammad objected to the prevalence of unfounded religious rituals that were more attuned to the superstitious and credulous inclinations of the laymen and much far removed from the scholarly approach of the orthodox establishment.

In recompense for his vocal objectivism vis-à-vis the eccentric rituals and doctrine of certain Sufi brotherhoods in Morocco, Sheikh al-Hilali became the subject of persecution born of scorn and vitriol on the part of his rivals. He was the victim of several assaults resulting from this, however -truth is like a tambourine whose noise only amplifies with repeated blows. Muhammad al-Hilali's reputation and stature as a scholar and academic only grew brighter reaching a wider audience through his many books and lectures.



## THE MEASURE OF GREAT LEARNING

It is true that a scholar's wisdom is measured in the weight of his actions, not merely in his words and to that effect, Dr al-Hilali possessed the style and demeanor of a veritable scholar who's unwavering dedication to Monotheism and Faith were undeniable, he was comparable to a lighthouse of learning who's luminous rays of light guided many a wandering soul out in the turbulent and dark oceans of ignorance.

His scholarship was praised by many of his contemporaries, including Algerian national hero Abdelhamid Ben Badis, who had expressed his high regard and admiration for a man of whom he thought was among the most educated in his time.

While many may be ignorant to the contributions and sacrifices of Dr Muhammad al-Hilali, many more continue to reap the harvest of his long and dedicated journey to first acquire and then transmit knowledge onto others.



## TRANSLATING THE NOBLE QURAN

In what remains one of his most memorable and popular works is the *Translation of the meaning of the Noble Quran* – which was the result of a collaborative effort alongside Dr Muhammad Muhsin Khan. Today this translation has reached millions of readers in several languages across the Muslim world and beyond, in its distinguished and elegant style this translation draws from the commentaries and insights of several traditional manuscripts dating back to the earliest sources supported by authoritative manuals including *Tafsir al-Tabari*, *Tafsir ibn Kathir*, *Tafsir al-Qurtubi* and *Sahih al-Bukhari*.

It was while at the Islamic University of Al-Madinah that Dr al-Hilali made his contributions to the translation of the Noble Quran and to several other works including the explanation and translation of Sahih Al-Bukhari and Al-lulu-wal Marjan, both of which were rendered elegantly into the English language and continues to serve millions of students and teachers towards drawing closer to truth and guidance.



## RETURNING HOME

Dr Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din al-Hilali returned to his homeland of Morocco toward the end of World War II after having departed from Germany, however due to the independence movement against the French administration in Morocco he soon travelled once more to Iraq, taking up a teaching position at the university in Baghdad.

Upon his eventual return to Morocco, Dr al-Hilali was appointed to the University of Mohammed V in Rabat, the year was 1959 however he was subsequently transferred to another campus in Fes.

Due to his popularity and experience, the Sheikh became a well sought after personality, prompting the Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia, Sheikh Abdul 'Aziz bin Baaz to send him an invitation back to Saudi Arabia in the year 1968, he was to be appointed a lecturer at Islamic University of Madinah, under the presidency and leadership of Sheikh 'Abdul 'Aziz bin Baaz.

The invitation was honored and Dr al-Hilali spent the following six years teaching at the University of Al-Madinah between the years 1968 and 1974.

## FULL CIRCLE

After having spent a lifetime on the road to knowledge and enlightenment, the circle of light that connects student to teacher had finally come full circle.

Dr Muhammad retired from academia in the year 1974 and shortly thereafter returned home to Morocco in what was to become his final journey. He eventually found solace and tranquility in Casablanca, where he retired during the final chapter of his life.

On the 22nd of June in the year 1987, Dr Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din al-Hilali passed away and with his departure onto a greater journey of discovery and enlightenment, the world of Islamic scholarship lost one of its brightest lighthouses.

# ABDULLAH QUILLIAM (1856 – 1932)

## MADE IN BRITAIN

### LIFE IN LIVERPOOL

Born in the bustling city of Liverpool in the year 1856, William Henry Quilliam became the latest edition to a relatively wealthy family whose deep ties to the Methodist church had earned them much repute as a committed Christian household.

From an early age, William Henry Quilliam had committed himself to a life of piety and abstinence from alcohol, this pledge he honored from his early childhood days up to the day he died.



### EDUCATION AND FORMATION

While still a young man, William pursued his education at the Liverpool Institute and King William's College on the Isle of Man, after many laborious years in pursuit of academia his studies culminated in the attainment of a PhD in Law and another in the field of Art.

William had to find practical means by which to pay for his ongoing studies during his formative years. One such means was achieved through his journalistic endeavors at a news publishing house known as *'The Porcupine'*, later on he became a respected solicitor at a legal practice from the year 1878.

It was while his reputation as a defense lawyer began to develop and take root that William extended his efforts towards more distant causes such as the appalling state and mistreatment of the Afro-American population in America, for whom he advocated earnestly.

While closer to home, Liverpool was soon becoming

a living nightmare with the proliferation of deadly diseases and the rapidly rising rates of alcoholism and prostitution – such decadence and depravity produced social inequity and destabilized the lives of some of the purest yet most vulnerable in society, the women and children.

Unable to turn a blind eye to the suffering and neglect of these poor souls, William Henry Quilliam dutifully served his community, of whom many were women who had been abandoned by their husbands and subsequently fell into the margins of society – towards this downtrodden and overlooked sub-segment of society, William offered free legal advice and practical support, for instance – he helped build orphanages where children would be housed and looked after while their mothers were out in search of employment and sustenance, during the holidays William Henry Quilliam would kindly organize to take them on trips to the Isle of Man.

By all measures imaginable, William Henry Quilliam was truly an English Gentleman.



## BECOMING MUSLIM

However resulting from the mountainous burden of work that was rapidly piling up before him, William was soon diagnosed by his physician and the worrying signs of fatigue necessitated that he take a vacation abroad where he could retreat and recuperate for a while. Thus in the year 1887, the overworked and over-stretched solicitor travelled to Gibraltar and then to Morocco.

This journey awakened many senses in William for even as he travelled on the ferry towards Morocco he couldn't help but feel moved by the sight of Moroccan pilgrims praying on-board the ferry, their faces full of serenity and their bodies in blissful submission– from an onlooker's perspective it would even seem plausible that while praying these gentle souls were not troubled by the raging winds around them or shaken by the mighty waves beneath them, for it was in his own word that he expressed a deep emotion as he looked upon their faces and their expressions displaying complete trust and sincerity.

William soon became intrigued and developed a profound curiosity into the beliefs and practices of Muslims that he could only satiate by reading several books on the topic of Islam and studying the works of prominent authors and scholars. Thus shortly after having travelled to Morocco, William Henry Quilliam renounced Christianity and converted to Islam, eventually changing his name to Abdullah Quilliam.



## DA'WAH WORK AND COMMUNITY

Despite the early complications and obstacles he faced having publicized his conversion to the religion of Islam, Abdullah Quilliam went on to establish the foundation of a Muslim society in the heart of Great Britain by establishing the Liverpool Muslim Institute at 8 Brougham Terrace in Liverpool's West Derby Road, this was the very first mosque in Britain.

However Abdullah's conversion to Islam did not diminish or alter his deep altruistic principles and his profound commitment to serving his society, in fact part of the Mosque's function was to educate all children, male and female - both Muslim and Non-Muslim alike. This open policy resulted in the building of *Medina House*, which was an orphanage built especially for non-Muslim children whose parents were no longer able to look after them.

The *Muslim College* was managed and taken care of by two fellow converts, Haschem Wilde and Nasrullah Warren. The curriculum was practical and further

complimented by weekly debating sessions and the initiation of a Literary Society that encouraged outsiders to participate and engage with the faculty and student body, the premises also housed a museum and a purpose built science laboratory.

In fact, the remit of his work was so vast and diverse that on several occasions he became a resource and a reference for local hospitals, with many of them contacting him on the occasions in which they had Muslim patients who needed moral and spiritual support while fighting severe illnesses.

Within a short period of time Imam Abdullah Quilliam had even secured Muslim burial grounds for his growing community, an example of this is the *Fazakerley Cemetery* – yet he went on to exceed even this level of dedication by contacting the surviving family members of the deceased in order to ascertain the level of debt, if any had been left behind - so that arrangements could be made to pay them off on behalf of the deceased.

## AN EXEMPLARY ROLE MODEL

In what remains today as remarkable as it would have been over a century ago, Imam Abdullah Quilliam's work and service to his community was truly exemplary and worthy of imitation. In the year 1893, he initiated a weekly publication entitled '*The Crescent*' with a latter monthly edition called the '*Islamic World*', these journals were printed on-site using the Mosque's own printing facilities, the publications subsequently gained wide circulation reaching an extended readership and subscription base in over 20 countries worldwide.

Abdullah Quilliam drew upon his earlier experiences in journalism in order to document the progress and development of the nascent Muslim community in Britain, to this effect he authored several works among which a book by the title of "*Faith of Islam*" became a successful print, eventually gaining publication in three editions and being translated into thirteen languages – the written collection was a medium by which Imam Abdullah Quilliam was able to reach many English people and communicated to them the pure teachings of Islam. Among the highly placed readership with whom the books found favour was Queen Victoria herself, the reigning monarch personally ordered seven copies for herself and for her children.

## RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION

For all the towering achievements and success of the early Muslim community in Liverpool there were also turbulent times and several instances where life and property were at risk.

The threats and provocations began to materialism almost as soon as the Mosque was first opened in 1889 when Imam Abdullah and his small congregation became the target of repeated acts of hostility from local thugs and gangs who would stand outside the premises and lay siege to it as they threw garbage and filth on the congregation while the Imam was targeted with stones.

The thugs also went as far as purposefully placing broken glass on the prayer mats and on the floor in order to inflict injury and lacerate the foreheads, hands and feet of the faithful as they engaged in prayer.

However, despite the ongoing antagonism and the continuous campaign of hate directed towards the Muslim community in Liverpool, there was no retaliation or reciprocation of harm – this resulted in the conversion of leading members from within the gangs and mobs on the rare occasion when they decided to attend the sermon and listen to the message being delivered without bias or animosity, resulting in the conversion of a protagonist who later accepted Islam and changed his name to Jamalludin Ali.

He became Imam Abdullah's close companion and dedicated supporter, henceforth the two men travelled together on every journey in which the objective was to spread the message of Islam.

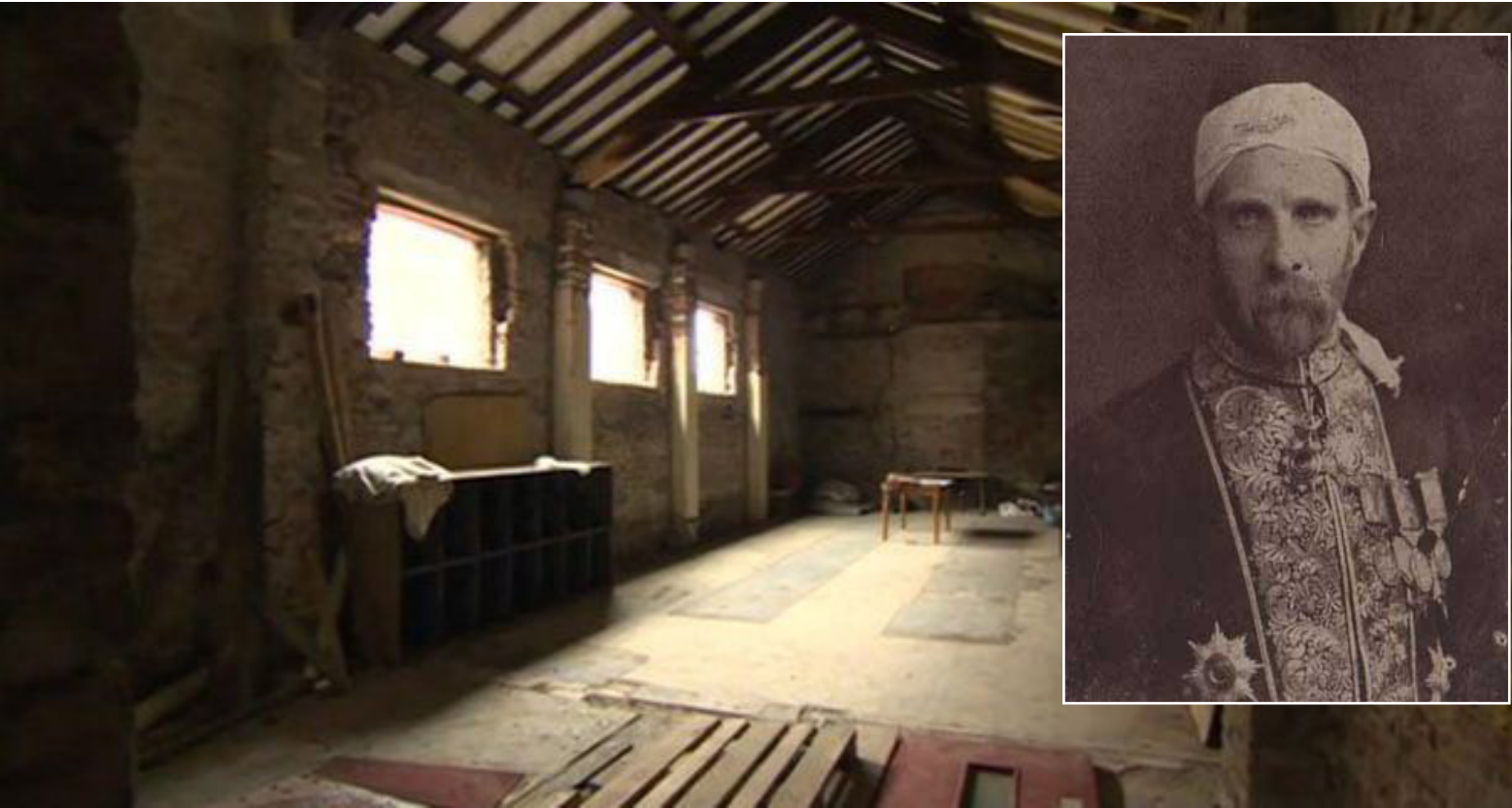




## INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT AND COMMITMENT

It was in the year 1894 that the Caliphe of the Ottoman Empire conferred upon Abdullah Quilliam - the illustrious title and rank of 'Sheikh ul-Islam of the British Isles' effectively making him the official community leader and spiritual guide for the Muslim community in Great Britain. This appointment was endorsed by Queen Victoria herself.

In due time, he had gained prominence and worldwide recognition while his many speaking engagements took him across the Muslim world.



## FINAL YEARS AND DEPARTURE

In the last chapter of his life, several ominous events began to overshadow his earlier achievements – and in the year 1909 he was disqualified as a lawyer and banned from practicing his profession.

Such inexplicable events may have been partially brought about by Sheikh Abdullah Quilliam's open and frank condemnation of foreign British military policies in Turkey and elsewhere within the Muslim world, in what was to result in the open declaration of treason being levelled against the Sheikh - the tabloid press began to malign and persecute Abdullah Quilliam for his stance against the policy of sending Muslims to fight other Muslims, as was the case with the Egyptian troops in Sudan. His relationship with the Ottoman Sultan also implicated him to be a traitor to the British empire.

Amid the rising tide of bitter sentiment and hostility towards him, Abdullah Quilliam and his son went into exile leaving Britain in June 1908. He never returned to Liverpool although he did come back to Britain in December 1924, this time he resided in London and changed his name to Haroun Mustapha or Professor Henri de Léon.

However in his absence, the tides of misfortune were further aggravated when his youngest son Bilal Quilliam sold the Mosque during his father's absence, resulting in the rapid dissolution of the Muslim community in Liverpool, leading to the slow and grinding stop to the activities and the worthy initiatives.

He died on the 28th of April 1932 in Taviton Street, Bloomsbury, London. His funeral rites were conducted in Brookfield Cemetery near Woking, this was the same resting grounds in which Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Marmaduke Pickthall and Lord Headly were also buried.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY, REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

## Imam Shamil of Dagestan

### Books

- “Muslim Resistance to the Tsar: Shamil and the Conquest of Chechnia and Daghestan”. Gammer, M, London, 1994.
- “Life of Schamyl; and Narrative of the Circassian War of Independence Against Russia”, Mackie, J. Milton, Boston: J. P. Jewett and co., 1856.
- “The Muslim 100: The Lives, Thoughts and Achievements of the Most Influential Muslims in History”, Muhammad Mojlum Khan, Kube Publishing (2008), ISBN978-1-84774-006-9

### Articles

- Smithsonian <http://achp.si.edu/chavchavadze/shamil.html>
- “Imam Shamil (1797–1871)”, Indiana University Press (2012), Rebecca Gould, ISBN 978-0-253-00176-4
- Wikipedia Entry [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imam\\_Shamil](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imam_Shamil)

## Sir Muhammad Iqbal

### Books

- Iqbal: “The Life of a Poet, Philosopher and Politician”, Zafar Anjum, Vintage Books/Random House India; 1 edition (13 Oct. 2014)
- “The Muslim 100: The Lives, Thoughts and Achievements of the Most Influential Muslims in History”, Muhammad Mojlum Khan, Kube Publishing (2008), ISBN978-1-84774-006-9
- Wikipedia Entry [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad\\_Iqbal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_Iqbal)

## Nana Asma’u

### Books

- “Educating Muslim women: The West African Legacy of Nana Asma’u, 1793-1864”, Jean Boyd & Beverly Mack, Kube Publishing (2013), ISBN 978-1-84774-044-1

### Articles

- One Woman’s Jihad: Nana Asma’u, Scholar and Scribe. – book review by Aisha R. Masterton. African Arts, Winter, 2001
- Jean Boyd and Beverly B. Mack (eds), The Collected Works of Nana Asma’u, daughter of Usman dan Fodiyo 1793–1864 (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1997).
- Wikipedia Entry [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nana\\_Asma%E2%80%99u](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nana_Asma%E2%80%99u)

## Dr Muhammad Taqi ul-Din al Hilali

### Books

- Dr. Abdul-Baqi al-Sayyid Abdul-Hadi, Biography of the Sheikh, Dr. Muhammad Taqi ud-Din al-Hilali. Alhady Alzahry, 13 November 2010.

### Articles

- “Authentic Islam” : the religious profile of Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī (1893-1987) as reflected in his fatwas”, El Amraoui, Abdessamad, Leiden University Centre for the Study of Religion, Faculty of the Humanities, Leiden University
- Website <http://www.dar-us-salam.com/authors/taqi-ud-din-hilali.htm>
- Website <http://www.alhilali.net/>
- Wikipedia Entry [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad\\_Taqi-ud-Din\\_al-Hilali](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_Taqi-ud-Din_al-Hilali)

## Sheikh Abdullah Quilliam

### Books

- Geaves, Ron (2010) Islam in Victorian Britain, The Life and Times of Abdullah Quilliam, Kube Publishing

### Articles

- “Half a Century of Islam in England”, lecture delivered by Sheikh Abdullah Quilliam at the held at the Muslim Youth Association Centre in Cairo on Thursday 9th August 1928
- Goddard, H 2011, ‘Review of Geaves’ Islam in Victorian Britain: the life and times of Abdullah Quilliam’ Yearbook of Muslims in Europe, pp. 729-731
- Website <http://abdullahquilliam.com/>
- Wikipedia Entry [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abdullah\\_Quilliam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abdullah_Quilliam)